

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

**Statement of
Morris X. Winn
Nominee for
Assistant Administrator for Administration and
Resources Management
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
before the
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate**

January 24, 2002

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, it is with great honor and privilege that I am here today as the nominee of President Bush and Governor Whitman for the Environmental Protection Agency's Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management, also known as OARM.

First of all, I am very proud of being asked to serve in the Bush Administration and with Governor Whitman, both of whom are aggressively working to enhance the level of public health and environmental protection for all Americans. I look forward to working closely with the Congress, to improve management and performance at

EPA.

Let me speak briefly about my background and discuss where I hope to bring new ideas and leadership to the position, if confirmed.

I have almost 30 years of experience in public service for the great state of Texas, working for four Texas governors and two Attorney Generals, who held different philosophical views. I had a leadership role in managing diversity, administrative support activities, and human resource programs in the offices of the Texas State Attorney General and Commissioner of Insurance. Most recently, as the Director of Human Resources in the Comptroller's Office, I developed and implemented an effective strategy to recruit, hire, train, and retain many high performing employees. We hired approximately 700 employees over 24 months without any grievances or lawsuits.

Throughout my career, I have pursued public service with a passion, and have dedicated myself to "good" government and governance, taking a balanced and common sense approach to managing both people and processes. I am a fiscal realist. I intend to practice frugal spending of tax

payers' dollars in all the offices under my management authority. I believe that public service, at all organizational levels, must be delivered with integrity, energy, and purpose. I bring to this position a keen and sincere understanding that public service is not simply a job, nor a profession! It is a public trust and high honor.

On this note, I firmly believe that our Federal employees-and the EPA family of approximately 18,000 people are indeed the Agency's most valuable asset. As we raise the bar of fairness and equity in the workplace, we must recognize that there are heroes on both sides of every issue. There are those who speak up about injustice on racial or gender issues; or government waste. On the other hand, there are those who tell you about all the right and good things happening at an Agency. I recognize that we need both of these perspectives in order to continually look for ways to improve the talent and productivity of our workforce and performance of our Agency.

If given the opportunity, I look forward to bringing these experiences and perspectives to the leadership team at EPA and to continuing to

sharpen EPA's focus on efficient management services.

I would like to summarize the values and principles that will guide me if confirmed as EPA's Assistant Administrator for OARM. They include: integrity and fiscal responsibility; openness and willingness to listen; fairness and accountability; proactivity; and a spirit of partnership.

EPA's OARM provides leadership to ensure sound management of administrative services throughout the Agency. The Office has a broad range of functions, including: management of human resources; contracts and grants management; employee health, safety and security; and facilities construction and maintenance.

My goal in providing leadership to these functions, is to help EPA, and its employees find the will to serve a growing and more demanding customer base. To lead this organization into a model or "best practice" organization, I would like to establish a system of total accountability where employees at all levels will "own" their jobs, that is, the duties assigned them. Employees should be free to succeed or fail based on their measured ability.

The tragic events of September 11th and the ongoing concerns over increased terrorist activity, have raised the level of anxiety throughout our nation. Federal employees have shown an exemplary degree of courage and dedication to serving the American public, rising to the President's challenge and returning to their jobs. I see one of my primary responsibilities as ensuring the safety and security of EPA's workforce and facilities. I will work to ensure that current efforts are consistent with the security demands of our times and work to test the responsiveness of those systems.

I am also aware that both the Congress and the President have concerns about the Federal government's Human Capital Crisis, and the resulting workforce challenges. In line with GAO's recommendations, I will ensure that we integrate workforce planning into the Agency's Strategic and Budget Planning processes, and under the umbrella of EPA's Human Capital Strategy, I will work hard to support the President's Initiatives.

Lastly, I will work to ensure a high level of integrity and accountability in the management of our financial resources. Each year, approximately two-thirds of EPA's budget is obligated as contracts or grants. The management of these resources is a very important function and must be done well. In this regard, I have been informed that the Agency has made substantial progress over the past two years, so much so that the grants close-out backlog has been virtually eliminated, reduced by 97 percent. If confirmed, I will focus my efforts, and the efforts of my management team, on strengthening oversight and making sure that we have early warning systems built into our processes and that the American people get cost-effective results from these contracts and grants.

In summary, effectively discharging the responsibilities of the Office of Administration and Resources Management is critical to meeting EPA's mission. I believe that it is in the best interest of EPA and the public to integrate mission goals and effective management with the principles of "good" government. I believe that bureaucracy, that part of government that is brushed with a paint brush of regulations and process, is important

so long as the process never gets in the way of good government and public policy. Bureaucracy is bad when it rewards poor performance in the same manner that excellent performance is rewarded. Bureaucracy is also bad when we govern by excruciating detail, dictating every result in advance. This kills management creativity and common sense.

This position will be a tough job as there are many challenges ahead for this organization. If confirmed, I pledge to bring the full weight of my integrity, energy, and experience to bear on meeting those challenges and raise the bar of excellence for this organization.

Let me close by expressing my appreciation to the Committee for its recognition of and support for the Agency's vital mission and the opportunity to appear here today. At this time, I would be pleased to take any questions that you may have.